

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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DISASTER ASSISTANCE APPROVED FOR NINE NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES

RALEIGH – In response to Gov. Mike Easley's recent request, the president has declared nine Piedmont counties as disaster areas due to damage from the Feb. 27-28 ice storm.

"This federal aid is vitally important in helping these communities recover from the storm and complete the clean up," Easley said. "We will work hard to process these reimbursements as quickly as possible."

Current cost estimates for response and recovery exceed \$16 million, 75 percent of which the Federal Emergency Management Agency has now committed to pay. The state will pay the remaining 25 percent of the expenses. Counties designated for the federal assistance are Alamance, Caswell, Forsyth, Granville, Guilford, Orange, Person, Rockingham and Stokes. Additional designations may be made as evaluations continue.

The day after the storm hit, Easley declared a state of emergency in those counties to assist in response and recovery efforts. He formally requested federal assistance March 11 once preliminary damage estimates were compiled.

Preliminary damage estimates for the counties are as follows: Alamance, \$476,993; Caswell, \$1,215,650; Forsyth, \$5,209,980; Granville, \$802,000; Guilford, \$4,778,347; Orange, \$670,000; Person, \$559,000; Rockingham, \$2,539,001; and Stokes, \$345,919. Estimates are at \$1.48 million for publicly owned electric companies, and the N.C. Department of Transportation reports \$12 million in cleanup costs.

Federal disaster funding is available to eligible local governments on a cost-sharing basis to cover debris removal, emergency services related to the storm, and the repair or replacement of damaged public facilities, including repairs to the publicly owned electric membership cooperatives.

All 100 counties in the state and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians are eligible to apply for assistance under the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The program makes funding available to local governments for approved projects that prevent or reduce long-term risk to life and property from natural or technological hazards.

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